

1264 QT

DECEMBER, 1950

carol mintz

yu-mei mao

robert bronson

frank w. appleby

norman rabkin

harold alexander

cecil nelson

john greene

r. l. brennan

caroline m. tonsor

25 CENTS



Illini Writers

Morgan

CAROL MINTZ: <i>The Dominator</i>	1
YU-MEI MAO: <i>The Hills</i>	10
ROBERT BRONSON: <i>Hiatus</i>	11
FRANK W. APPLEBY: <i>Hell</i>	17
NORMAN RABKIN: <i>The Monks</i>	17
HAROLD ALEXANDER: <i>Local Landscape</i> (watercolor)	18
CECIL NELSON: <i>Still Life</i> (watercolor)	19
JOHN GREENE: <i>Remember the Spent-Time Waiting</i>	20
R. L. BRENNAN: <i>The Twins</i>	24
CAROLINE M. TONSOR: <i>Four Women</i>	25

STAFF

Managing Editor R. E. HOOVER

Literary Editor STANLEY ELKIN

Poetry Editor BARBARA CORBETT

Department Heads: Advertising, Bev Dady; Magazine Exchange, Mildred Novosel.

General Staff: J. R. Anderson III, Robert Bonner, Carol Edwards, Marjorie Knop, Donald Shanafelt, Carol Simenson, Alex Thien.

Faculty Advisors: John H. Schacht, Frederick Jauch, Leah Trelease.

Illustrations by Ruth Ann Davis, Don Brodie, Robert Bonner.

Cover designed by Robert Mizrahi.



ILLINI WRITERS is published by the Department of English, University of Illinois. Single copy price: 25c.

Copyright, 1950, by Charles W. Roberts

The Dominator



It rose and rose, and the ground fell back from It in amazement, and It rose higher, and broke through the clouds, and the sun gleamed on It, and It shone back with more fire than the sun, till the sun was forced to shrink, dissolve and disintegrate within It, and then It gleamed and shone more furiously, until It dominated. . . .

He sneezed and sat upright. The room was becoming brighter with sunlight. Mr. Milgram blinked rapidly and leaned over to turn off the alarm which hadn't rung yet. He prided himself on getting up consistently at five minutes before seven, but he always had the alarm on just in case.

Mr. Milgram lay in bed for three more minutes and then it was time to get up. He pushed one leg out and then the other, and sat on the edge of the bed, stretching his arms to his sides. He yawned luxuriously and looked at the clock; it was exactly seven o'clock. He hurried to the bathroom.

As he washed, he thought of his day's program. Of course he would write it all out when he got to the office, but there was no use in wasting time thinking after he got there. He decided he would call the plant first of all, to see if those lost orders of Johnson's were found. Manufacturing storm windows was a hard job in a tough, competitive field, and "Milgram's Weather Windows" had to retain their reputation for efficiency. He would have to tell his employees that, at a not too distant time. If the plant hadn't finished looking for the

orders yet, he would have to see to it himself, later; Johnson was a good customer.

Then he would call in his secretary, Hilda, whose competence saved him much time, and dictate letters. That would take not more than forty-five minutes; that is, he would take no longer than that, at any rate. It would be about eight-fifty then. He would write a letter in the next ten minutes to his Aunt Helen in Denver, thanking her for his birthday gift. He disliked the red-checked necktie that she had sent, but that was beside the point.

At nine he would start calling his clients, checking on orders, soliciting more. He would return as many complaint calls as he could in one hour of the morning. He always devoted the hour between nine-thirty and ten-thirty to that. He would have to call Mrs. Engle; her windows were too short, and her little girl had rheumatic fever. They would have to fix those windows right away; Mrs. Engle was a good customer.

He thought, now let's see. The important things are, find out about Johnson's lost orders at eight; dictate letters to Hilda at eight-oh-five; write Aunt Helen at eight-fifty; call Mrs. Engle at nine-thirty.

He would go to lunch at eleven. . . . His fingers slipped, and he cut his chin with the razor. His arm reached out past the mirror that hung from a string, to the bandages on the shelf. The mirror slipped off the string and crashed to the floor.

He stepped back, his face paling, with the blood trickling down his chin. He could see his face in pieces and distorted, in the broken mirror on the floor. Let the maid clean it up; he wouldn't touch it. Let her have the bad luck—but no. Of course it was the person that dropped it who got the bad luck. God damn, why in hell did this have to happen? Seven years' bad luck—why in blazes! He wasn't superstitious, he told himself, but there were some things—. A man in his position—after all he didn't like the feeling of—well, the thought of—. He paled again looking down at the mirror.

Then he stiffened abruptly. Some of the blood had splattered his undershirt, and as he ran from the bathroom, to the other room, a little of it dropped on his shoe. He reached the clock, turned it furiously to him, and saw he was five minutes late already. He whimpered like a frustrated child, deprived of some pleasure. Five minutes late. Five minutes, and he preaching to others because he was so prompt all the time, and now, he, five minutes late to the office, he, Mr. Milgram. Why in

hell—that damn mirror—seven years. More of the blood had gathered on his shoe as he ran back to the bathroom.

* * * *

It was cold outside, very cold. Smoke was coming from the small building below her window, and Jane Engle could see the wind catch it and tear it to pieces. She watched it for a while, without blinking, making herself strain to keep her eyes open. Finally she had to close them. Her eyes felt good closed, but she opened them to prevent herself from falling asleep. She didn't want to sleep in the day time; she did enough of it at night.

Jane put her hands carefully together, the fingers entwined securely, but not tightly. If she started going to sleep, she would be able to wake herself by untwining her fingers, and moving her arms to her sides.

She moved her head sideways on the pillow and began to concentrate on the second hand of the clock that sat on the night table. One . . . two . . . no, she never seemed to be able to do it. She never got the right rhythm. It wasn't that she hadn't tried often enough; goodness knows she'd tried so many times. But somehow she never could seem to count the seconds exactly with the second hand on the clock. Perhaps she just didn't keep trying long enough at one time, but this time too, she turned her head away.

In the front of the apartment, she could hear her mother washing dishes. She knew her mother was almost finished by the clatter of the large blue plate that they used for main courses. Her mother always washed that last, before the silverware. After the silverware, her mother would come into the room where Jane was, and wish her good morning. Her mother would ask her how she felt, and, after talking with her for a minute, would go to bring Jane her breakfast.

Jane decided that today her mother would be wearing the greenish-blue cotton house dress. If she was wrong, Jane told herself, if her mother was wearing the yellow flowered one, she would hold her breath for fifteen seconds. But if her mother wore the bathrobe, which was the third and last outfit she wore around the house, she would hold her breath for twenty seconds. No one knew of these games she played with herself. They always made her feel as though she had accomplished something, or had made a victory. Even just the physical effort of keeping her eyes open for seconds without blinking could make her feel proud.

Mrs. Engle turned the corner, and Jane could see the red lumpy body; it would be twenty seconds then, she told herself grimly.

Mrs. Engle hurried in, creating a gust of wind. "Good morning, Janie, honey. How are you feeling, huh, darling?" "Okay."

"That's swell. My, what a cold dreary morning this is. I'll be glad when those storm windows come. You sure do look cozy, all snuggled up in bed, warm as a bear. I wish I could stay in bed all day, you lucky girl." Her mother's eyes became wistful—easily—and then changed back. "Well, I'll get your breakfast ready quick as a flash, and *then* you'll feel good. The new *Life* ought to be here today."

Mrs. Engle left in another gust of wind, and as she turned the corner, Jane started holding her breath . . . eighteen, nineteen . . . ohhh. She breathed rapidly, and her lips curved with relief and success.

She always day-dreamed between the time her mother left, and came back with her breakfast. She had a stock supply of day dreams. Sometimes she would imagine herself on a horse, riding furiously over the range, toward the nearest place of rescue. There could be any number of reasons why she was rushing for help, and that's what made that day dream one of her favorites. Or she would day dream about skiing in the Alps and finding a freezing person huddled in the snow. It would be up to her to get him rescued, and she would be confronted by all sorts of obstacles.

Today she began to day dream another of her favorites. This consisted of her doctor finding a miraculous cure for rheumatic fever. She would be the one they would try it on, since she would be near her death anyway. And about a day after they gave whatever it was to her, she would suddenly jump up, completely cured, and astonish everyone.

She smelled scrambled eggs, and her mother came in with a tray.

"Here we are. Now let me fix those pillows; don't move for heaven's sakes."

Mrs. Engle set the tray down by the bed, puffing; she pulled the pillows higher, and gently lifted Jane to a half-sitting position.

"Now let's go. Eat slow, dear, and I'll be back in a few minutes."

Jane reached out for the fork and ate some of the scrambled

eggs. She bit a half circle into a piece of toast. It was eight twenty-five, and she had thirteen and a half more hours before she had to go to sleep. That afternoon at two, four, and six, she had to take pills. She would read from breakfast to lunch, but after lunch she had to sleep for an hour. She sighed; it was eight-twenty-seven, and her eggs were getting cool. She knew her mother would be back at eight-thirty, to keep her company until she ate all the food. Jane took a few more bites of the toast. She looked at the milk on the tray, closed her eyes visualizing where it was, and reached for it, with her eyes still closed. She jumped as her hand knocked it over; it spilled on the eggs.

Jane sighed and looked dismally at the clock. She heard her mother's footsteps; it was eight-thirty.

* * * *

Careful, careful, don't make a sound; she'll hear you. Slow, easy, don't rush. For Christ's sake, take it easy. Close it gentle, gentle. There.

The shabbily dressed man leaned against the wall, outside the apartment door, and smiled. He opened the purse and took out the wallet. Christ, eighty bucks and seventy cents. What a haul. Worth following her and waiting all this time. What a break seeing her count that dough—someone's coming down the hall.

The man hurried down the hall away from the apartment door, his shoulders crouched. . . .

A tall, well-dressed, middle-aged woman came to the door and rapped on it.

"Hilda, dear, it's Marilyn."

The door opened revealing another middle-aged woman, much smaller, but equally well dressed.

"Hello, Marilyn."

"Good morning, dear. My you look nice this morning. I do like that suit."

"Thank you. You look very well yourself. Isn't that a new purse?"

"Yes, I bought it yesterday."

"Oh, Marilyn, by the way, would you help me look for my purse? I went to the store early this morning, and cashed a check, and now I can't find my purse anywhere. I'm a little worried."

"Certainly, Hilda. It's probably right where you put it. I always say—"

"No, it's not, Marilyn. I put it right here on the couch I

remember distinctly. And then I went to the kitchen to drink my coffee. And then just before you came I noticed—”

“Well, if it's not there it's somewhere. Let's look around. We don't want to be late for work. Let's see.”

The women began to search the small apartment. Hilda searched worriedly, and then frantically.

“It's not here, it's not here anywhere. Marilyn, I cashed a lot of money, about eighty dollars, and now it's not here.”

“Well, dear, I know, but don't worry. Look for it at lunch time. Take another purse and let's get to work now.”

“But it's not here—I can't leave not knowing—”

“I know, Hilda, but look what time it is. We'll be late if we don't hurry, and you know how Mr. Milgram acts then. Come on.”

“Marilyn, how can you? Can't you understand? I had eighty dollars—”

“I tell you Hilda, you can look later. I don't want to be late to work. Are you coming?”

Hilda stopped and stared around her with wide eyes. “Yes, yes, I don't want to be late either. I have to go through all the files today before lunch, so Mr. Milgram can check stock in the afternoon.”

“Well, then, for goodness' sake, you don't want Mr. Milgram harping on your neck all week, how you didn't get your work done on time. Come on; if I don't get *my* work done, I won't be able to take my shopping pass at three.”

They left the apartment and hurried out of the building, walking rapidly. They reached the train station just as their train arrived.

“That was lucky,” Marilyn puffed. “We'll just make it now.”

“Yes.” Hilda thought, I'll look during lunch hour, and be back in time. I'll catch that twelve o'clock train, reach here at twelve-fifteen, look for twenty minutes, eat lunch at home, and be back by twelve-fifty-five the latest. That will just give me time, just time enough. She leaned her head back against the window, and closed her eyes drowsily. The words revolved around in her head. Just give me time . . . time just enough . . . time give me just enough . . . Time . . . give . . . me.

* * * *

The door bell rang and she sat quietly listening to it. It was nice to sit and listen to the door bell, because it rang so seldom, and also because it had pretty musical chimes. That

would be the postman, she knew, because it was eleven o'clock, and the postman always came at eleven and three.

The elderly lady rose then, and softly padded on her bedroom slippers to the wood panelled door. "Hello, there."

The postman smiled. "Hello, Miss Milgram. Only a letter and an advertisement today." He handed them to her.

"Thank you. And how's your little boy today?"

"Fine, fine, Miss Milgram."

"Good. And how's your wife feeling?"

"Better, thanks, Ma'am. Well, got to run; have to get these other folks their mail on time."

"And how's your little girl?"

"Fine. Well, good morning, Miss Milgram." The postman turned and moved down the street.

"And how's your—oh. He's gone." Miss Milgram closed the door gently, from the inside, looking at the mail in her hand.

"Oh. From Ed. How nice."

She tore open the envelope eagerly, and then before she began to read it, she carried it to her favorite chair by the window. She always sat in this green leather chair to read Ed's letters. They came so seldom that everything must be perfect when she did read them. Ed was her only nephew. She often thought of him as a mother would toward a son—she had no children of her own—but Ed never treated her as a mother, she knew.

She sighed as she sat in her chair and looked down at the letters. She liked to savor the feeling of having the letter in her hand and not having it read yet; the pleasure, then, was still to come. This letter was probably thanking her for the birthday gift she had sent him. Dear Ed, he was always so prompt and efficient. But she would like it so much more if he had been late and enthusiastic. She turned the envelope over and looked at the return address engraved on the back in neatly blocked letters. "Mr. Edwin Milgram, 320 South Michigan Blvd., Chicago, Illinois." She slowly took out the letter.

"Dear Aunt Helen, Thank you very much for your thoughtful and kind gift. I admire the tie; you have good taste as I always have said.

"How are you feeling? Is your arthritis bothering you very much? Don't overwork yourself; as you know you are not a young woman any longer.

"Thank you again. I shall look forward to your reply. Your loving nephew, Edward."

Miss Milgram smiled as she put the letter down. What a dear boy. He was right, too. She should be taking it easier. She wasn't young anymore, and those walks she'd been taking—well, it would have to stop sooner or later. If she stopped sooner, she might be on the earth later.

She thought of Ed and how he had never married. It would be nice if he had a wife and children. She could do so much for them. All she could do for Ed was send him presents when the occasion arose. Birthdays, Christmas, Easter; the years went by, and she felt time slipping by her, and she hadn't done all she wanted.

He would be surprised when next year's birthday came. She was knitting him an afghan that was to be the best thing she had ever done. Her knitting had won in several contests, but this was to be the supreme work—everything had to be perfect. Every day for three hours, when the best and strongest light came through the window by the green leather chair, she would knit. Sometimes, though, her eyes would ache, and tear, and then she would have to stop for a while. This was happening more and more frequently lately, and she was getting more and more worried. If her eyes became too bad, if she became too tired to work very much, what then? She had to furnish a living replica of the beautiful afghan in her mind. Ed would have it always, to remember her. And if he ever married, perhaps his wife would keep it for her children, and they for their children. She would be almost a legend. She could hear her great-great-great-nephews, saying to their children, "This lovely afghan was made by your great-great—"

Her stomach hurt her suddenly as fear flooded it. What if she didn't finish—in time? What if her years crept up on her suddenly and she couldn't see, or become too weak? Oh, if she only had thought of this afghan sooner. If only she had more time. If only Time would permit her to finish it.

She turned to the clock on the wall. It stared at her, impassive, unknowing, unsympathetic. She almost spoke aloud to it, in her fear; she almost implored it with a taut throat, to give her more time. She almost said aloud, in dreadful earnestness, "Please—let me finish it. Time—let me finish."

* * * *

Johnson lighted his cigarette and leaned back comfortably, as comfortably as he could, in his chair. Around him was the roar of the crowds, moving, yelling, laughing, milling. He felt relaxed there, just one of the crowd. No one to bother him with

trivial business details; no one to say, "Yes, Mr. Johnson, No, Mr. Johnson," in what seemed to him mimicking, mechanical voices. Those words were mechanical, just as his whole day was mechanical. All his days. Always he spent a mechanical day at the office, moving with the others, in the same way, doing the same things in the same spaced intervals. Always something went wrong, not enough to cause a disruption of the mechanics, but just enough to cause annoyance. Today it was the storm windows he had ordered. His orders had been lost, and he had to have the man from the plant come down and take measurements again. That took time away from his work, and he stayed an hour overtime to finish up.

But here there was nothing mechanical, nothing annoying. Only the excitement of a good hockey game, indoors. He liked ice hockey; he had been a good skater when he was a boy. Johnson enjoyed watching the big, padded men struggle for possession of the puck, push each other around and get rough. Those referees were as rough as any of the players, and just as good on the ice. Rough as the players were, the referees could get rougher, and when they said stop, they looked as if they meant it.

The game began and he settled back, looking at his watch. The game was starting right on time, at eight o'clock. He'd be home by twelve at the latest, even if he met some of the boys.

The home team scored and Johnson was on his feet, cheering with the crowd. The next few minutes of the game were unprofitable for both teams. The home team was good, but the other team seemed equally good at the moment.

Johnson yawned, moving around in his seat, making himself more comfortable. He looked up at the huge clock, hanging high in the middle of the closed arena. Undoubtedly it said eight-ten on all four of its gigantic sides, but he could only see one of them. Below the clock's face, were gadgets and mechanisms that told the seconds, the score, the penalty-time elapsed, and whether or not the game was in play. This last gadget consisted mostly of a light that flashed red or green, and continued flashing the seconds away, no matter which light was on. If the light was flashing red, play had stopped; if it was flashing green, play was resumed.

Johnson looked at the other gadgets and marveled at the intricacy of them. All these gadgets, too, were on all four sides of the huge clock. Science, Johnson mused, is wonderful. He kept looking at the red seconds skipping away, and out of the

corner of his eyes, he could see the motionless players on the ice. Suddenly green seconds began flashing, and the players were in immediate motion. Johnson kept looking at the green seconds going, and he thought, imagine, seconds passing away right before my eyes. Science is wonderful. Then as the green flashes turned to red, the players stopped abruptly, as if by some force. Johnson frowned. That's queer, he thought. It's almost as if —he laughed, and looked down at the ice again. But as play went on he kept glancing up at the clock. The lights flashed at him, seconds passed in color, and an odd sensation began to take hold of him.

Now he couldn't take his eyes off of the lights on the clock, but still he could see the players. And as the seconds changed color, the players changed their motion. So abruptly. So immediately. So in rhythm with the clock.

He looked around him. The crowd roared and cheered; he didn't feel a part of them any longer. Could they see it too? No, they kept looking directly at the players. He was crazy, he told himself; but it looked so strange. Yes, it was strange.

The crowds moved forward; they sank back. They cheered; they booed. They waited for the players, intent upon their actions; they waited and the players moved. And the crowd acted according to the players' motions. But it was strange. For as he stared at the colored seconds, he couldn't be sure; he couldn't tell. The players moved—the clock changed. The clock changed . . . the players moved.

CAROL MINTZ

The Hills

(from *The Transplanted*)

The hills around have huddled up, and sleep.
A lonesome bird flies to its far-off nest.
The grass devoutly bows a million heads
And murmurs breeze-borne prayers
Of peace and rest . . .

The crescent moon is willing to embrace—
An empty gesture on a starless sky—
And in a cloud of horror hides her face . . .
The only light still left glows
From your eyes . . .

YU-MEI MAO

Hiatus



After the class sang "Jesus Loves Me" and the Sunday school teacher said, "That is all for this week," Benny and Hugo pushed their chairs into one corner, as they had been taught, and ran up the stairs that led to the big church with pews and a pulpit. But they opened the door to the street, where they stopped to blink their eyes against the sunlight and to stare at the grown-ups who were going to the service in the church, whose steeple seemed to push into the bottoms of the clouds when Benny and Hugo looked at it from where they stood, at the very bottom of the church, overgrown with English ivy, with patches of sandstone poking through the vines and the five pointed leaves. Hugo plucked one and tore it into five pieces. Benny picked one also and dropped it on the sidewalk. Hugo yanked off a length of vine, stripped the leaves from the stem, and cracked it over his head. "Gidde-up, you stallion." He whacked Benny on the back with the whip; Benny snorted and jumped about, pawing the air with his hands and arms. "You mustn't do things like that, little boy," a big-hat woman castigated. "You're apt to poke his eyes or hurt him. Now be a good little Christian and throw the vine away. Or I shall tell the janitor that you tore some of the viney from the church." Hugo dropped the whip against the woman's foot and turned: "Come on, Ben."

Benny and Hugo ran into the alley in back of the town hall next to the church. The door of the town hall was propped

open by a brick. The hallway through the building was long, and cool compared to the heat waves that shimmered above the bricked alley, and the rubbish cans, and the unscreened porches across the alley that had shirts and stockings and pants hanging on lines strung from one end of them to the other. Benny and Hugo stood on the door steps and looked into the dark hallway of the town hall. "Just go through." They walked inside, drank water at a water cooler, and dropped the paper cups into the waste can. Through a doorway Benny and Hugo could see a policeman sitting at a desk, writing. They went in to watch him: he didn't see them, so they stood without saying anything. The police sergeant replaced the pen in the pen holder, saw the boys; "Well! What do you want? Do you want to be put in jail?" "We want to look at the police station," Hugo explained and Benny nodded. "Kids aren't allowed in here. You'd better go home. Your mothers'll be wondering where you are." Benny and Hugo went slowly through the rest of the hall. At the telephone booth near the front door of the town hall Hugo said, "I'm going to find my name." He opened the directory and began to glance through the pages. Finally he said to Benny, "There she is. See." A young woman in very high-heeled shoes and very blonde hair click-clacked through the swinging doors and stood for a moment watching Benny and Hugo; "I would like to use the directory, boys. You may play with it after I am through." She took the book from Benny, who was looking at Hugo's name, and began to thumb through the pages. Benny and Hugo pushed the swinging doors together, slipped through, and jumped two steps at a time down the entrance to the town hall.

There were no people in front of the town hall, although a woman and two children and some men were sitting on the benches in the small park across the street. Benny and Hugo walked along the street, past the haunted house. All of the panes of glass were broken, the shutters hung askew or lay in the weeds on the ground, the front door of the house stood propped up against the wall of the house on the front porch, the stone fence was crumbling and overgrown with weeds and morning glories. Benny and Hugo went up to the wall. Hugo pushed on a cracked piece of stone. It fell into the yard. A fluted pillar stood midway along the fence. They put their hands against the base and pulled. The column quivered. Benny kicked at the stone. A large piece of stone at the top of the pillar grated slowly forward. Benny and Hugo ran as the

block crashed onto the sidewalk, shattering the rubble. Hugo went back, while Benny waited, to pick up a small stone from the mess for a good-luck charm. Someone was coming down the street toward them, so Benny and Hugo ran the rest of the way until they came to the hill. Benny shook the chain of the painted colored boy that stood ironly still waiting for someone to hitch his horse to it. Hugo touched his stone to the statue's head to bring more good-luck to the stone. A man came out of the Mansion House and got into his car which was parked in front of the colored boy. People in white suits and long summer dresses sat in porch chairs on the long white veranda behind the Dutchman's-pipe vines that shaded them. The green-white striped awnings flapped a bit in the breeze. English sparrows perched on the window sills and flapped around the white-painted railings. The people on the veranda looked at Benny and Hugo and they looked at the people. When no cars were coming they crossed the street. A hunk of metal from a motor that was piled against the wire fence of the used-car lot had rolled out onto the sidewalk. Hugo picked it up and held it, turned it about, gave it to Benny to look at. Benny dropped the hunk of metal. Hugo picked it up and put it into his pocket with the stone. He reached through the fence and tugged at another piece of metal that hung loosely from a fender dropped against the wire fence. The bolt slipped from the hole. Hugo put it into his pocket.

They walked down the hill, patting a collie at the third house, finding a penny in the gutter—Hugo put it into his pocket—chasing an alley cat across McKurnan's lawn and into Theauwen's apple tree, skipping pebbles across the road, throwing pebbles and stones at three pigeons. By the wood-planked, iron-railing bridge across the Manhan, "Just cross under the dam," Hugo said. They turned down the dirt Mill street. The dam man was not in sight at the dam house. The river flowed smoothly over the wooden dam except where the water splattered around a suspended bole of a tree. Hugo found a flat rock and skipped it along the water. They walked down the bank to look at a new-green-painted rowboat. Benny grabbed hold of the prow, the boat swung outward; his feet splashed into the water, the sticky muck. Hugo grabbed Benny's arm and pulled him out of the water; "You'll get it. Wipe them off on the grass." Hugo untied Benny's shoes. He took off his socks and wrung them, emptied the water from his shoes. After putting them on again, they pushed through the bushes until they got

to the top of the dam. Hugo went out on the cement to where the rungs of steel formed a ladder down the side of the dam; "Just climb down on the rocks." Hugo climbed first, then Benny followed. They walked along the red rocks with deep round holes that the falling river had worn during high water. Grey logs and boards and rocks were piled up at the foot of the dam. Clumps of grass and weeds grew in the drying crevices. A stunted elm hung from a silt-covered ledge. Benny and Hugo jumped from ledge to rocks to the brick wall at the bottom of the dam house. A sandbar stretched into the stream of deep water that flowed from the interior of the building. A narrow ledge of cement protruded along the side of the passage that carried the water from behind the dam, through the building, to the riverbed below. "I'm going in. Coming, Ben?" Hugo slithered down the rocks and onto the cement catwalk. Benny followed. They held onto the wall of the tunnel for support as they inched along the way into the darkness. "Dark in here," Hugo's echoed words clattered along the walls. The rush of water became louder as they walked deeper into the tunnel.

The caretaker of the small powerhouse, looking at the pressure gauge, decided to release more water through the tunnel. He walked over to the wheel and turned it several times. The wooden floor vibrated with the sudden rumble of more river pouring through. He returned to his chair, propped himself back against the wall, continued reading "The Scarlet Skull."

Benny grasped Hugo's arm when he felt the water against his feet. Hugo turned, feeling the water also. "Hurry up, the river is rising!" Hugo's whisper broke into heavy breathing. Benny scrambled along as fast as he could. He slipped several times on the wet cement. Hugo pushed his arm. "Hurry up!" The dirty water swirled at Benny's legs; he slid his hands rapidly along the stone wall, shuffling his feet in short fast steps. He blinked his eyes against the sunlight and dashed across the water-covered sandbar. His feet stuck in the sand, but he pulled hard and reached the rocks. He turned and looked for Hugo. Hugo did not appear at the entrance of the tunnel, although the water rushed in brown swirls against the lower rocks. Benny looked at the river and saw Hugo in the water, splashing his arms and sinking beneath the ripples that his helpless arms made. He ran across the rocks, tripped over a muddy branch, and sprawled against the hard stone. His knees and elbows trickled blood from the scratches as he stood up and the front

of his shirt was torn. Benny ran again until he came to the edge of the river. Hugo bobbed in the deep water, the current carrying him across the long pool toward the bend. Running down the rocks onto the sand beach of the river, Benny pushed through the thick dried brush: stumble, snap of limbs, scratch, grass-hidden bogs. Benny reached the bend; Hugo was caught by his coat in the branches of a fallen oak that stretched into the river. Benny crawled along the trunk of the tree until he could grab Hugo's arm. He yanked him back along the trunk, holding his head above the water. Hugo kept catching in the branches. Benny pulled him loose, slipped forward slowly with his legs around the sides of the tree. He dropped into the water when he neared the sand and dragged Hugo onto the sod bank.

He shook Hugo, tried to stand him upright, but Hugo was too heavy and fell backwards onto the grass, a little water trickling from his mouth. Benny clasped his arms about Hugo's waist and struggled backwards through the brush toward home. One of Hugo's shoes caught in the root of a tree. Benny pulled and the shoe dropped from his foot into the grass. He stopped to rest, not unclasping his arms. When he could breathe better, Benny started to pull again. The leaves of the bushes itched his sweaty face and arms. He could not scratch the itches, because he would have to let go of Hugo. At an embankment, Benny pushed Hugo over and then scrambled down the slippery clay sides. He had to bend Hugo's legs awkwardly to get him down the small cliff, but Hugo did not speak. Two brick walls of a deserted and collapsed mill stood against the side of the hill ahead. Saplings grew through the rotting basement floorboards. Benny placed Hugo against one of the walls and sat down. He moved Hugo's face with his fingers, but Hugo did not respond. Benny shook Hugo. Hugo slumped to his side. Benny sniffled and stood up. Hugo was too heavy to carry.

He looked out from the dilapidated cellar-hole at the glint of river through the woods and then at the glint of sunlight on Abercrombie's roof past the wood road. He began to run up the hill. He slipped and fell several times, but did not pause to look at the skinned shins. He cut across the pasture into the cornfield, the pollen and rough leaves scratching his skin. Benny stopped at the dump to see if there were any hornets, then ran across the tin cans and bottles that clattered under his feet and fell in short avalanches after him. A web of a yellow and black spider caught against his leg. He shuddered, but the spider fell into the long grass and he brushed the sticky web from his skin. He

ran along the path that wound through the little woods to the street. He could see his house from the field and his lungs and side hurt now. Benny stopped at the brook in the gulley. He washed some of the dirt from his arms and legs so that his mother would not see. Then, running through the sumac grove, he brushed at his shirt. He climbed over the railing of the porch and went into the kitchen. She was setting silverware for dinner and looked up. "Benny, where have you been! Look at you, all covered with mud and wet to the skin. Why didn't you come right home from Sunday School? You could have helped me set the table. Your knees! Have you been playing with Hugo in the woods? Here. Write!" Benny panted heavily, grasped the pencil and paper and printed slowly, **HUGO FELL IN THE RIVER HE IS SICK IN THE WOODS.**

She read the words and ran to the telephone. Benny went out of the door and climbed over the railing. He walked very slowly because he was very tired. He cross-cut Tubby's yard and the apple orchard into the woods. Benny went down two hills; when he saw the river he turned left and followed the path. He walked softly and slowly, looking at the dirt in front of him, putting one foot in front of the other, right in the middle of the path between the straight-trunk trees and the leafy gloom. Benny ran when he saw the brick wall. Hugo lay on his side on the rotting wood. Benny sat down beside Hugo, and pulled him to a sitting position. Both sat silently and the people came down through the woods hurriedly, snapping twigs from the bushes and breaking sticks on the path. They stood around while two of them poked at Hugo and one nodded his head with sorrowful eyes. "What happened, little boy," an old man demanded. Benny stared at the man without moving. He could feel Hugo's cold arm beneath his hand. Benny's mother pushed past the old man and the others, pulled Benny to his feet: "Please! He is a mute." The old man, and the others, stepped back slightly. They looked at Benny. The old man moved his lips, but he said nothing. "We'd better go home now, Benny," his mother said, after a pause. They walked away slowly. His bruised legs began to hurt him now. People were still coming down through the woods. A short distance away, Benny turned and looked back at the crowd that had gathered around Hugo.

ROBERT BRONSON

Hell

there is no end there
where the wind blows bare
the tree leaves and i leave
with the tree leaves bare

shuffling feet and leaves
naked lost shuffling
blowing where the winds blow
the wind blows the wind

knows there is no end
there where the bare
feet shuffle and the leaves leave
the tree bare there with the wind

FRANK WILLIAM APPLEBY

The Monks

He was astonished to hear that the monks never spoke, got up at two in the morning and slept in their coffins.

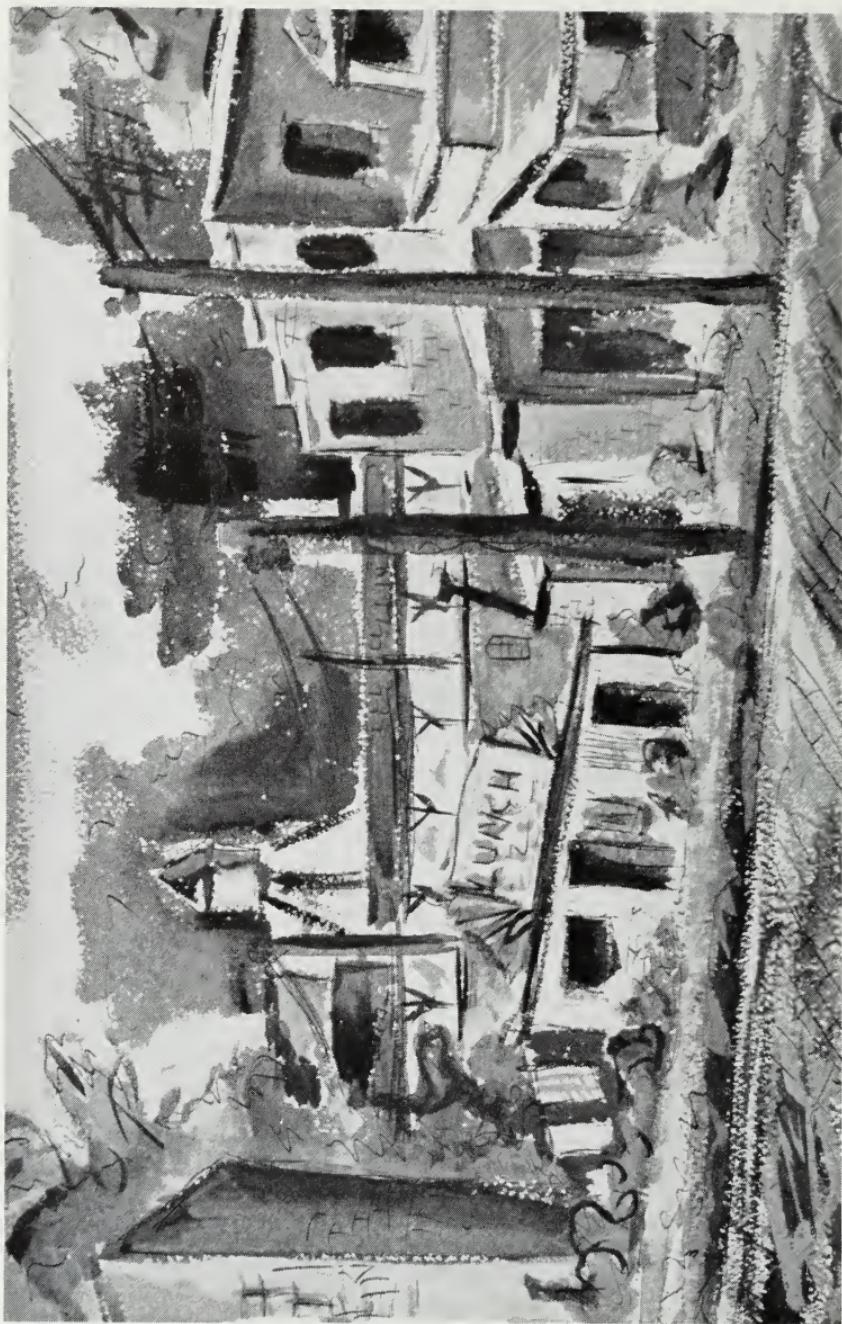
Joyce, *The Dead*

In the sureness of angles each rests without waiting,
The circles of God a secret undared:
In the day they are careful to strut through straight gardens
They cut and they corner and they close, keeping kind.

One of them slipped from his box in the night
And took to dry arms a quivering moon:
He slipped from his box to die in a jungle,
Moist in the mouthings of cornerless vines.

In the sureness of angles each rests without waiting:
But over the coffins none thinks to extinguish
The hard yellow light which slits through the boxes
To keep in their sight the edges of God.

NORMAN RABKIN





Still Life

CECIL NELSON

Local Landscape (opposite page)

HAROLD ALEXANDER

photographs by Gil Davis Studios

Remember the Spent-Time Waiting for that Which Never Came

Down toward the base of the tongue you can still remember the cool cutting bite of the beer that old Harry drew from the tap. It was soothing balm when you tasted it and looked toward the front of the dark bar and saw through the colored glass the flat solid glare of the sun on the red-brick buildings across the street. The brick would move in the heat beyond the gold-leaf sign on Harry's window. The window was cheap glass and the cars and people that passed in the street were slightly distorted. What was outside of Harry's window was not quite real; it was an overtone to the coolness of the beer in your throat. The afternoon would go very fast like this, and then in the cooler early evening you could sit at a small table in the rear and watch the people as they sat at the bar and listen to the music from the record player that Harry always kept turned soft. Neither Harry nor his place had any pretensions, but they both bore a certain air of dignity that kept the loud-mouths out and allowed the time to pass mellowly. There was a rack full of magazines in the back of the room and you could get a magazine and lay it on your table. You seldom read the magazines, but they were beautiful when you laid them face up on the table and looked at the colors against the grainy table top with its rings of glass-wetness. (It never came here, although it was very close at times when you half-closed your eyes and looked at the magazined table-tops and the slow-motion passing of the street through the tinted window, saw gold leaf and red bricks past inside darkness turn to shimmer in the sun. It was almost there but yet not quite.) But you lost all sense of urgency when you were in Harry's and it was a good feeling. It was a cool dark cavern in the summer, and the heat waves above the street gave the beer a luxurious taste in your throat.

It was not at all like the thick throat-burning vodka that filled your nose with vapor at the Del Mar, and you could look across the narrow park on the cliff-top and see the hazy blue

Pacific lying flatly below the grass and flowers of the park. It was there all right, the big liquid curving over the hump of earth, and it was a fresh thing to see, a deep-breathing clean thing to see. Half-hazy in the north were the Santa Monica mountains and the sea-rocks at Malibu. The mountains stopped just short of the beach except in some places where they didn't wait for the beach and went striding out into the sea. There were tall bunchy palm trees in the park on the cliff and their shadows were long and parallel in the afternoon. Girls would walk in the grass there in the evening and also old people with stickpins and furs who had come to California to die. You could look out the open window and see it all. You could even see the end of the amusement pier two hundred feet below in the ocean, and at night it was lit up with lumps of light that reflected in the water and sparkled with the waves. It was good to sit and leave your eyes unfocused, trying to capture the movements of the sea and the people and the pink-footed gulls that flew over the cliff all in one big picture, one blurred colorful picture. (It almost came there, the day you had been swimming in the big after-storm breakers, and had dried yourself in the bath-house and were glad to be dry, had a still water-logged head, eyes still unclear from the water, and had walked up the wooden stairway on the face of the cliff with the stiff breeze cooling you and the sunlight strong on the rocks, entering the almost-empty Del Mar and drinking vodka before the open window, seeing all this, feeling all this but nothing too strongly; that time you came close to having it, you could feel it around you, but there was no name to put to it and it eventually escaped before you could confine it, but it almost came there.) And on Sundays the people would fill the park with wrinkled newspapers and empty bottles and cigarette butts on the green grass and they had to sprinkle the grass every day to keep it looking green because it did not rain much. But there were light fogs in the morning and they were cool, and softened the outline of the roller-coaster on the pier, and sometimes hid it entirely. In the morning you could walk through the mist out on the pier and breathe the fog and the salt and fish-smell from the boats and markets, and hear the small muffled sounds of morning through the thick haze and feel very detached when you looked over the rail and saw the roll of the sea beneath you, rising up and then dropping from the wooden piles. And at night from any part of the coast you could hear the immense swishing drop of the roller-coaster

and then the slow clacking climb to another crest, almost stopping, uncertain, before the next plunge into the night.

Yet it was all slightly different from tasting the fruit-like flavor of the Collinse that they served at the Circus Bar in tall glasses with slender yellow-glass sticks to stir them with, rich and sweet, like the Circus Bar itself. The red-cushioned stools, the many-angled mirrors, and the circular bar gave the place the look of a merry-go-round, and you were always unconsciously waiting for it to revolve. And perhaps it and you did revolve there, for there was no end to the nights and days, they came and went and there was no beginning and no end to anything. There was a small Spanish orchestra there that was fond of Malaguena and the Bolero, and you could revolve on the great slanting circle of the Bolero and feel your blood in the drum-beats, pounding soft and hard, rising to the climax that never really came, never really came even in the final persistent blaring of the trumpets, but was ready to begin again, to revolve again, to almost say again what it had almost said before, rising up on the curve to catch the essence of everything but then dropping sharply as if afraid to say it (perhaps those who know are afraid to say it?). Or you could ride on the pounding inevitability of Malaguena, letting it beat itself into you, pushing you along the incline that always led to dead-wall determinism through the intricate twistings of the melody always returning, always saying, yes, come back here, there is no escape, you belong here, this is it, this is the course (or was it really it after all?). (It, too, came close when you could sit and drink in the world through Spanish eyes, be Life as it is pushed through a tunnel thinking it is in a meadow wondering which way to turn when there really is no turning to the tunnel, only the leading tunnel, buried rock-bottomed tunnel, serpentine turnless tunnel leading where?) That was the place where you could find good-looking women—who wanted to be found—at any hour of the day, and some of them had money but some of them were bluffing like yourself. The drinks were too expensive to get drunk on but it was easy to get intoxicated on the music and on some of the women, and the time passed quickly enough.

The breath of the place was not like that of the raw, face-making whiskey that you could get cheaply at the Utopia and the girl who played the electric organ very well early in the evening, but who was always drunk later, saying Hello to everyone and letting them buy her drinks, even though she

didn't get a cut on them. The walls were hard and were lit with dull neon and the tables and booths were crowded close together on the floor. (It never began to come here and the closest it got was the big voices of the steelworkers who would come in on Saturday night in dirty clothes and two-day beards, joking loudly and shoving, but yet with a singleness of outlook that was deceptive in its sureness of itself, inviting in its simplicity, and you could never quite define the fallacy that was somewhere there, but you knew it was there, so it didn't come very close.) The girl had very delicate features, would talk intelligently about anything you chose to talk about, and you often wanted to ask her just what it was that made her not give a damn any more, but somehow you could never bring yourself to ask her. Afterwards in the night you would remember and would wonder what happened to her. Although the whiskey was not good it was cheap and you could wash it down with coke or beer while you looked at the big girl-pictures on the wall and waited.

And of course you can remember the cool green bottles of ale that the starched-white waitress would bring through the crowd to the dark initial carved tables in Cloyd's and how everyone would sing loud tuneless songs on Saturday nights and thump their glasses on the table. It was not a fighting crowd and it was pleasant there even though it was noisy. The cigarette smoke was thick and through it you could just see the juke box glowing red in its own light, and through the smoke you could hear the music at times above the voices and the singing, and you could almost abstract yourself above the cloud of smoke and look at all the motion of faces as if they existed only in a gigantic chord of music and noise. The smoke pulsed up and down with the opening of doors and if you let yourself lapse you could be at the bottom of the ocean with the liquid slowly moving above you and with the noise, the very distant breaking of the surf, far above you and meaning not so much as the silence and the smooth-pulsing currents of water and seaweed in the cigarette smoke. (Almost it was there in the seaweed smoke, hanging around your head in slow convolutions, curling itself serpent-like through the smoky water with delicate and languid movements, profound silence in the midst of uproar, moving eternal motion through time-blurred faces fading in and out of actuality, cool death in the ale-filled evening.)

JOHN GREENE

The Twins

(from THE PINETREE CHURCH)

They were the only twins among those people.
One grew strong and tall;
The other, Phillip,
Had been misshaped at birth
And had a misformed left leg and shoulder
And, since birth, held his head to the left
As if always looking and listening.
But still they were the only twins
Ever born of a family
Of the Pinetree Church.
As they grew, they acted less alike,
Less like twins.
Phillip began following the stronger one,
Always with his head held to the left
As if always looking and listening,
Like a young and puzzled animal;
The stronger one was active
While Phillip watched and listened.
Those people had taken a pride in their twins.
But, after watching them grow,
Hated God or fate for making one deformed.
The winter the twins were nine
And were both sick with scarlet fever.
The people of the Church hoped secretly
That God would at last take back
The imperfect one
And leave the other to grow stronger alone
Without his misshaped identity following.
As their sickness grew worse,
The people became afraid they'd both die
And prayed secretly
That only Phillip would die.
When April came, and winter
And the disease were past,
Phillip played alone in the yard,
His eyes weakened, but still he listened
With his head held to the left;
And people of the Church,
Whenever passing by,
Turned furtively
And looked the other way.

R. L. BRENNAN

Four Women



At five o'clock in winter there was a moon hung over the town; the sky was cold and fruity, the moon like a knife among grapes. The town blinked with melon-colored eyes, and inside most houses was a stir of hunger. But in the apartment on South Seventh at five in the evening, the two girls were still sleeping. Rose's face was swollen with sleep, and her long arm, large-boned, hung over the mattress. Her long flat fingers touched the carpet, limp and suspended loosely apart from each other. She slept face down with her head turned aside a little in the pillow. Her sister, Bell, at the other edge of the bed, slept with her elbows shut-to so tightly under her ribs that the blood moved slowly in her veins and her hands went nerveless. The heat came on in the room, but the hiss and spastic spitting at the radiators didn't waken the girls. The light was sucked from the edges of the room while the shade went flap . . . flap . . . gently at the window. When the light was gone, the cold air came to the sill sooty and acid with smoke. Bell, her nose between the mattress and the wall, breathed the sharp air as it slipped along the wall, and down to the crack under the closed door into the hall.

Bea came home at six. She left the hosiery shop at five-thirty, or as soon as she'd put the dust-covers on her counters, gossiping in a wavering almost snarling voice with the other

clerks: ("if that darn Chick Leonard makes us stay late again tonight—"). If she could get out of the store quickly, and push her way into the five-thirty-five bus—it was a jam, but she was little and sharp-elbowed, and she could "shove just as hard as the next fellow by golly,"—if she could get on, then she stopped off at the A&P on South Grand, and was home by six. It was not a long walk from the supermarket to the apartment building, past the school, the funeral home, and the block of houses, but every step on her spiky heels jarred at the weariness in her. Every step went through her like a whine, starting at the sharp toes of her shoes, at the cutting instep, at the jarring heel, and going up through her, clear to her eyes. In the dark she let her mouth sag. But although the shoes made her feel how tired she was, all through her body, they were a comfort to her. When she thought of them (she tasted the lipstick on her lower lip, and made a provocative mouth in the dark), she felt disguised against the world. She felt like a woman who was going home to fix a quick career-girl supper, like the ones in the magazines, with good-looking, substantial men in the background. Well, Mr. Leonard flirted with her a little; he flirted with all the girls, but she thought *she* knew him. She was a little wiser than the kids just out of high school; she had his number all right, and she let him know it. He wouldn't get far with her; she could see right through him. She stubbed a loose brick with her toe, and wobbled, hugging the grocery sack, and the shock against her weariness nearly made her cry. It never came to anything, the flirting, anyway. And she was worn out, and her feet hurt. Of a morning, her shoes felt good and tight, wonderfully tight and chic, and her stockings were pulled up snug and straight; the shoes made a fine sharp click on the walks and a fashionable scrape now and then; the sweet smell of "foundation" and powder was in her nose, and she could smell the cologne on her scarf and neck. (She put it on very strong because it had to last all day.) Her gloves and her "bag" looked trim. Her hair was combed out neat and fuzzy under her hat—and what if there were a few gray hairs—well, the hat was a beret, and it was red, and she wasn't getting too old for a little fun! Let them ask her.

Now she crossed the last street, and there was no one to see her shoes or her red beret, and she felt tired. She felt cheated—after such a long day to have nothing much to come home to. The little dog would be glad to see her; he would fling his hot tight body against her feet, jump for her nose and lick her face,

and love her a little. But then he had to be taken out and walked, and he jerked at the leash all the time or made her stand and wait for him. And would Marilyn be glad to see her, or would she be sprawling over the magazines sulkily? She would call her Bea, not Aunt Bea any more, and she wasn't little and sweet any more, she was fifteen. But she was something, anyway, and maybe home from school.

The new roomers in the extra bedroom would probably be sleeping—there'd be crumbs from their lunch on the kitchen floor again, and the marks from their big feet on the chairs. And late at night their alarm would go off, and they'd make noise getting up and getting off to work at midnight; they'd take baths, letting the water run loud and heavy in the tub, keeping the neighbors awake too, besides herself and Marilyn—and she needed her sleep. On Sundays they didn't help with the cleaning, and they hardly ever would go down to the "Georgian" for cheeseburgers with her and Marilyn Sunday nights. Well, they weren't in the way at least when she was home, only when she heard them getting up. No telling what they didn't do when she wasn't home—use the piano, mess up the new magazines and everything.

She opened the door of the building and the hot hall air rushed over her; the building was warm. The brown stairs were old, wide, and they creaked underfoot, under the rubber matting. The bulb at every other landing let down crossed shadows.

The roomers, in their sleep, heard Bea undo the door at the end of the hall, and the little dog jumped from the chair in the other bedroom, skidding on the waxed hall and over the carpets, tense to greet her. She didn't try to be quiet. She said, "Hello—hello, darling—Ooooo! 'Es it was! 'Es it was! Dod love it." The little dog squealed and scratched at the carpet with its uncut claws. "Wan' go out?" Bea said. The dog squealed. The harness and leash were shaken. Bea called, "Mar'lyn, Baby? You home? There was no answer. The outer door was opened and slammed shut; the noise descended and receded down the stair.

Rose hit her pillow with her fist. "Gosh," she said bitterly.

"My arm's asleep," Bell said. "Ow—" And they were asleep again.

Later they heard the piano very far away, "Pling—" Marilyn was playing. Bea crooned, "Bessamaaaayy—," very

loud and nasal just beyond the bedroom wall, and Bell sat up in bed frowning. She put her feet on the floor and stood up before she realized there was no need to go and tell them—She slumped down on the edge of the bed. There was nothing to tell them. She must have been dreaming. Still she sat there slackly, letting her ankles be loose against the carpet and her hands hang over her knees, and she stared at the dark wall with lax swollen eyes, thinking about them. Marilyn would be sitting at the piano hunched over because she was used to feeling overgrown beside her friend Patty, and little Bea. Marilyn was big and not very well filled out yet, but she moved clumsily as if she felt heavy. Her skin and hair were dull; no matter how much time she spent pinning up her hair, it was lumpish in the end. If she washed her face hard it looked glaring and white, and her nose got red. If she didn't wash it, the thick white skin was greasy, and it broke out terribly—it broke out in any case. Her only friend was Patty, a little dark, pug-nosed girl who, although she was near-sighted and nearly ugly, was lively and domineering and possessively loyal, and sometimes made Marilyn feel miserably big and pale.

"Bessamay . . . Bessamaymucho . . ." Now she was pounding away at the bass, fast and inaccurate. The heavy throb came through the walls. Bell put her legs under the covers, and tried to cover her ears with the pillows.

" . . . moocho! *Love memy darling . . .*" Why does she have to sing so passionately, Bell thought, irritated, when it doesn't do her any good. There's no blood in her, stale, broody, sluggish, and either sad or silly. And she doesn't have a chance to find out what kind of person she might be; tries to imitate, looks at the movie magazines and the fashion ads, and only feels awful in contrast, and doesn't fit in anywhere, and doesn't have the will-power to stop eating chocolate and to brush her hair. . . . Doesn't have a chance to be interesting either. Look at Bea; look at the apartment, all dead, or going dead, and nothing but magazines to read—

Look at Bea, tight, sharp-nosed, coarse little woman, always working hard and smoking over her coffee Sunday morning hurriedly and making terse, trite, self-pitying comments on the world. The awful Sundays! Her only day off you'd think she'd relax a little, but no. She hurries breakfast sitting on the edge of a kitchen chair with her skinny legs crossed in their cotton slacks. Then we see why the rooms have waited all week. They wait for this, for cleaning day, to have the shades flapped

up so the windows stare at the bricks next door. The undented cushions are beaten, the nap on the carpet scraped by the vacuum like a boar's head gnawing it, with the cord flipped and rattled over the floor, causing the dog to squeal and scramble. And all afternoon, Bea's tense hands, now in the basin of water wringing the gray rag, now at the newspapers on the floor, taking the old ones up, scrubbing, and laying the new ones down; Bea squatting or stretching here or there in her cotton slacks, her sharp bones poking out in all directions, and her voice all afternoon: "Mar'lyn, why'n'cha get busy and dust the buffay, and do a little something here."

"Aw, Bea—"

"Well, *Honey*, I'm not the only one who walks through this place, you know." And then they dust the "buffay" and the long divided mirror hung too low for any use—

"Love memy darling"

Hunched at the piano with her hands on the keys, Marilyn felt good. She felt good because she had been to Pat's after school. They looked at the new *Calling All Girls* magazine, ate jelly on Ritz crackers, caramel corn, and fudge; put up each other's hair in a new way they saw in the magazine (sitting on the living room floor with some water in a dish, pins, curlers and a comb). When they both had their hair fastened up in bumps against their heads, and their thin necks showed, brownish under the edge of the hair in back, they tied on their bandanas. They decided Marilyn should ask Bea, and Pat should ask her mother if they could have some money to buy those tricky leather belts with purses on them which they had seen in the window downtown. They were advertised in *Calling All Girls*, too. Pat thought they should get them just alike and wear them with their plaid skirts. Hunched over the piano, with her damp bandana sticking to the back of her neck, Marilyn almost felt as if she had the belt already and had walked down the halls at school wearing it, and she felt good.

At eleven o'clock the moon was gone. Soot settled on the windowsills and on the cold railings of the grey backstairs, and the fog pressed down. Indoors, the lights were out.

"Agh, there it goes," Bea said, turning over in bed.

"Hnm," Marilyn grunted from the other bed.

"Gonna tell them they'll have to get a quieter alarm clock," Bea said.

"Hnm."

A faint light appeared under the door. There was a thump against the wall. Bea threw back her covers and scuffed her feet into her "mules."

"Bea! Where you going?" Marilyn said, sitting up.

Bea jerked the door open and confronted Rose who was coming barefoot down the dim hall. "I have to ask you girls," she began, "to take your baths in the day time instead of at night. The neighbors are going to complain, and I know you don't think about it, but I—" And she went on in a nice voice with a special edge of niceness in it, and Rose leaned slackly against the wall and listened, her large eyes drooping.

Marilyn could see them through the doorway. She didn't watch Bea, because she was used to the way Bea looked, her sharp shoulders drawn up in her limp thin gown and her head large as an embryo chick's with the hair all skinned back in curlers. But she looked at Rose—lucky Rose! Rose could live wherever and however she pleased, she earned her own money, she worked in an office. Anything could happen in an office! And Marilyn wished so *much* to trade places with Rose—to be out somewhere with a job and on her own—she had to thrash at the pillow or the covers or something—

Rose nodded and nodded, and leaned on the wall, with one cold foot over the other, and Bell came out and stood back of her, and they both stood listening in their old small cotton pajamas from which their long limbs protruded; they stood nodding and agreeing and watching Bea with their large childish eyes.

At a quarter to twelve the whole building was quiet and dark except in the one kitchen where Rose and Bell were trying to tear the waxed paper for their sandwiches without making that terrible ripping sound which tore through the quiet like a beast's snort.

"Well, the quicker the better," Rose whispered. R-R-R-IIIIP—

Bell washed and dried the few utensils one at a time and set them precisely into their places in the drawers and cupboards.

RRRRRRRRRip

"Why don't you wrap them both in the same piece?" Bell whispered.

"But I have to have two at *least*," Rose hissed.

They had their coats on; their shoes were under the table.

Quickly they slid into them, and glanced at the kitchen—everything neat—and took their black lunchboxes. They turned off the light, and felt their way through the living room to the door where the stair light shone, and out.

They closed the door; the stairway creaked under them, and at the first landing one of the lunchboxes fell open; the thermos rolled with a sharp bang on every step to the next turn of the stair. Bell picked it up and heard the slush of broken glass slide in the coffee inside when she turned it upright and laid it back into the box. They listened. None of the doors on the landings opened. Rose was down the stairs. "Hurry!" she whispered.

They were outside, and running along the wet cement in the cold air past the blue neon of the funeral home which burned in the foggy air with a soft steady buzz. They were on the brick walk, walking fast and panting, with little spurts of running, jaggedly catching up to each other and falling behind. The curb of the schoolyard was along the walk. They stayed together there, and hurried along looking sideward at the black yard. They couldn't see into the dark bushes and corners. (Was the German shoemaker there—the odd one who asked where they lived when he sewed up Bell's moccasins? Why did he ask where they worked and when they went to work—with his bald head shining under the green lamp, his cold odd speech cut by the whine of the sewing machine. . . .)

They hurried over the humps the tree-roots made in the walk, toward the avenue. A bus had just gone. They could see it turning four blocks down at Ash. A man cutting the corner of the schoolyard quickly approached the stop. Bell pressed Rose's arm.

"Say, you girls know what time it is?" he said, and stopped before them. It was not the shoemaker. He wore a tight black Chesterfield coat, and a small black derby, and he was a little man.

"Why, no," Rose said. "I think it's late, though. I mean it must be after a quarter to."

"Da-gone!" he said. "Shoot. I bet I missed it again. There ain't any busses after a quarter to. Had me a real good watch, and it's broke. Alarm clock ain't no good. Thowed it out, out on the ash heap, I got so mad. Set it up agin in the basemint. . . . But it don't run good."

"Well, sometimes another bus comes along about five of," Rose said.

"Yes, but usually it's only going to the garage," Bell said.

"Where you girls work at?" he said, looking at them sharply for the first time from under his hat.

"Allis-Chalmers," they said.

"Yeah, think I've seen you around. . . ." With his hands in his pockets (they would hardly go in, the coat was so tight), he looked back down Sixth Street.

"Oh," Rose said. "Do you . . . ?"

"Yeah," he said wearily. "Work in the shipping room, you know, loading things. . . ."

(In those clothes, the girls thought at each other.)

"Got me a real good job," he said. "Th' overtime and all. Gonna buy me a new car next. . . ."

There was a bus in sight, a faint blur under its sharp roof-lights. It came on slowly, bobbing up the street like a big pigeon gawking along a windowsill for crumbs, innocent and clumsy. Now they could hear the tires along the street, and all their attention was relaxed on the bus. They would get to work in time tonight. But then, over the windshield appeared the lighted sign, GARAGE. The bus pulled up, the door opened, the driver said, "How far you goin'?"

"Allis-Chalmers," the little man said.

"I don't go that far. There'll be another fellow along in about ten minutes." He shut the door, and the bus was off, droning faintly into the fog.

"Dang it I'm going home," the little man said, turning and starting off. "If I don't get fired this time." His voice was drained away in the dark. Now the girls were alone. The town was still, and they were certainly late to work.

CAROLINE MADDOX TONSOR

Concerning Contributors . . .

CAROL MINTZ . . . former staff member of *Illini Writers* . . . a senior in journalism . . . Chicago resident.

YU-MEI MAO . . . graduate student in English . . . published a volume of poems in China in 1945.

ROBERT BRONSON . . . from Greenfield, Massachusetts . . . "Hiatus" his second contribution to *Illini Writers*.

FRANK WILLIAM APPLEBY . . . senior in sociology . . . likes Bartok, Dylan Thomas, Eliot . . . calls Chicago home.

NORMAN RABKIN . . . English major . . . from New York City . . . plans to teach and write . . . has appeared before in *Illini Writers*.

HAROLD ALEXANDER . . . senior in art education . . . married . . . an Urbana resident.

CECIL NELSON . . . senior in F.A.A., majoring in advertising design . . . painting done in advanced watercolor class.

JOHN GREENE . . . has contributed frequently over the past several years to both *Illini Writers* and *Tempo* . . . Bronze Tablet graduate . . . now working in Chicago.

R. L. BRENNAN . . . senior in L.A.S. . . . from Geneseo, Ill. . . . "The Twins" is part of a larger work, in preparation.

CAROLINE MADDOX TONSOR . . . contributor of long standing to *Illini Writers* and *Tempo* . . . married to Stephen Tonsor of the history dept. . . . "housewife" this semester.



3 0112 105630187

STRAUCH'S

Fronting Campus at 709 South Wright, Champaign

The Center for
SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Fountain Pens • Mechanical Pencils • Inks

Laundry Cases • Zippered Note Books • Fillers

Study Lamps • Locker Locks

PHOTO COURSE TEXTS AND SUPPLIES

Gifts • Jewelry • Greeting Cards

FOR COMPLETE PHOTO STOCKS, STOP AT

STRAUCH PHOTO CENTER

IT'S

Schreiber's
BOOK STORE

For

USED BOOKS

SAVE 25%

FREE BOOK COVERS